Research Notes for John Whelan (1820 - 1898)

Research Overview

John Whelan belongs to the kind of Irish family that is easiest to lose and hardest to reconstruct: rooted in place, dependent on parish and local records whose survival is uneven, and large enough that repeated names blur individuals into one another. The identification of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan as parents came from Irish Catholic baptismal records for their children, James Whelan and Norah Whelan Mullahy. Those records provided the first secure footing for reconstructing the family in Ireland and made it possible to trace siblings and extended kin in the Dungarvan area. From that point, siblings, kin networks, and long-term residence begin to take shape.

What emerges is a couple raising children in and around Spring (Duke/Marquis) through the Great Famine years, when the effort to keep a household intact sits behind the record's silences: repeated births during the famine years, children who appear only once in the parish books, and the fact of a household expanding while the local food supply collapsed. Read together, the family's landholdings describe a household under pressure: a single dwelling supplemented by small adjoining plots and a garden, used to extract as much food as possible from limited land during years when survival depended on it.

For at least half a century, records place him and his family within a tight cluster of townlands—Spring (Duke/Marquis), Curraheen Commons, and nearby plots in Kilrush parish—areas small enough that they function less as separate locations than as a single lived landscape. Griffith's Valuation shows a John Whelan holding land, a house, and small parcels across these adjoining townlands in 1851, and later records return repeatedly to Spring as the family's anchor. That he stays tells us things the records never say outright: economic constraint, dependence on nearby kin, limited options during and after the famine, and a household structured around continuity rather than mobility.

Of John and Catherine's large family, the two oldest sons are missing entirely; they do not appear in later Irish records or among known emigrants, and their lives remain unresolved, with DNA evidence offering the only possible means of recovery. Several daughters either didn't marry or

didn’t have children, persisting in the record only through shared residence and later census listings. Two daughters, Catherine and Mary, remained in the Dungarvan area, married locally, and raised large families. By contrast, a middle group of children—James, Norah, and Ellen—left Ireland for the United States.

Research into John Whelan’s siblings and parents is ongoing. Parish records, shared residence in the same small cluster of townlands, and recurring associations in baptism sponsorships point to several candidates with names and partial records, but not yet proven. These possible siblings matter because pushing back even one generation opens an earlier chapter of the family’s life in Ireland. The outline of that family—parents, siblings, and allied households—can be sketched, even where individual links remain unresolved.

Time Line:

c. 1820– **Born** likely in the Dungarvan area, County Waterford, Ireland.[1]

Parents not yet proven. Candidates include John Whelan and Mary Crowley (per Pam Holland's report), but this relationship remains unverified in the surviving records assembled here.

The surnames Whelan and Phelan are interchangeable. The spelling used was determined by the record keeper (Catholic priest, government official, etc.)

4 Jan 1822 - Birth of sister Julia Whelan (1822 - 1976) at Waterford, Ireland.[2]

12 Feb 1839 - Marriage to Catherine Sullivan (1819 -1889) at Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland.[3]

Marriage of John Whelan (recorded as John Phelan) and Catherine Sullivan at the Roman Catholic parish of Dungarvan, County Waterford.

Intermarriage between the Whelan and Sullivan families, with at least two siblings from each family marrying.

Mar 1840 - Birth of son John Whelan (1840 -) at Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland.[4] Possibly died in County Limerick, Ireland.

[1] NEHGS Pam Holland report?

[2] Greenlawn Cemetery Gravestone Transcriptions give her date of birth.

[3] Dungarvan Roman Catholic Parish (County Waterford, Ireland), Parish Registers 1839, Joannes Phelan and Catharina Sullivan, married 12 February 1839, digital image, "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655 - 1915", Ancestry.

[4] Catholic Parish Registers, The National Library of Ireland; Dublin, Ireland; Microfilm Number: Microfilm 02469 / 01, "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655-1915", Ancestry.

Apr 1841- Birth of daughter Catherine "Kate" Whelan (1841 - 1925) at Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland,[5] baptized 25 April 1841 in Spring, Dungarvan, died 7 November 1925 in Springmount, County Waterford.

Jun 1842 - Birth of daughter Mary Whelan (1942 - before 1851) at Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland.[6]

Nov 1843 - Birth of daughter Ellen Whelan (1843) at Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland.[7]

Great Famine - 1845 to 1852[8]

John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan were raising a growing family in Spring (Duke/Marquis) during this period.

1843–1847 – Gap in surviving baptism records for the children of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan; one or more births may be unrecorded, or the records may not have survived.

Oct 1847 - Birth of son Edward Whelan (1847 -) at Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland.[9]

[5] Catholic Parish Registers, The National Library of Ireland; Dublin, Ireland; Microfilm Number: Microfilm 02469 / 01, "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655-1915", Ancestry.

[6] Catholic Parish Registers, The National Library of Ireland; Dublin, Ireland; Microfilm Number: Microfilm 02469 / 01, "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655-1915", Ancestry.

[7] Catholic Parish Registers, The National Library of Ireland; Dublin, Ireland; Microfilm Number: Microfilm 02469 / 01, "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655-1915", Ancestry.

[8] Catholic Parish Registers, The National Library of Ireland; Dublin, Ireland; Microfilm Number: Microfilm 02469 / 01, "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655-1915", Ancestry.

[9] Catholic Parish Registers, The National Library of Ireland; Dublin, Ireland; Microfilm Number: Microfilm 02469 / 01, "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655-1915", Ancestry.

Oct 1848 - Birth of son James Whelan (1848 - 1895) at Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland.[10]

Before 1851 - Death of daughter Mary Whelan (1951 - before 1895) in Waterford, Ireland.[11]
The reuse of the given name reflects the likely death of an earlier child of the same name, consistent with mortality patterns during the famine period.

Jan 1851 - Birth of daughter Mary Whelan (1851 - after 1895) in Waterford, Ireland.[12]

This younger Mary later married Michael O'Neill (Neill) and remained in County Waterford.

1851 - Griffith's Valuation at Curraheen Commons Townland, Waterford, Ireland.[13]

11 Sep 1852 - Birth of daughter Honoria E. "Nora" Whelan (1852 - 1921) in Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland.[14]

7 Mar 1855 - Birth of daughter Johanna "Anna" Whelan (1855 - 1881) in Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland.[15]

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[10] Catholic Parish Registers, The National Library of Ireland; Dublin, Ireland; Microfilm Number: Microfilm 02469 / 01, "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655-1915", Ancestry.

[11] Death is based on a second daughter that they named Mary.

[12] Catholic Parish Registers, The National Library of Ireland; Dublin, Ireland; Microfilm Number: Microfilm 02469 / 01, "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655-1915", Ancestry.

[13] Ireland, Office of the General Valuation, General Valuation of Ratable Property in Ireland (Griffith's Primary Valuation), County Waterford, Dungarvan Poor Law Union, Kilrush Civil Parish, p. 147, Curraheen Commons Townland, Map Reference 2b, John Whelan, 1851; digital image, "Griffith's Valuation," Ask about Ireland.

[14] Catholic Parish Registers, The National Library of Ireland; Dublin, Ireland; Microfilm Number: Microfilm 02469 / 01, "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655-1915", Ancestry.

[15] Catholic Parish Registers, The National Library of Ireland; Dublin, Ireland; Microfilm Number: Microfilm 02469 / 01, "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655-1915", Ancestry.

1856 - Birth of son Michael Whelan (1856 - 1859) in Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland.[16]

Before 1859 - Death of son Michael Whelan (1856 - 1859) in Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland.[17]

30 Oct 1859 - Birth of son Michael Whelan (1859 - 1930) in Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland.[18]

The reuse of the given name reflects the likely death of an earlier child of the same name.

6 Apr 1860 - Birth of daughter Mary Whelan (1960 -) in Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland.[19]

Jun 1861 - Birth of daughter Margaret Whelan (1860 -) in Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland.[20]

Several given names recur among the children, consistent with the loss of earlier children of the same name: a daughter named Mary in 1842, another Mary in 1851, and two sons named Michael, born in 1856 and 1859.

[16] Death is based on a second son that they named Michael.

[17] Death is based on a second son that they named Michael.

[18] Catholic Parish Registers, The National Library of Ireland; Dublin, Ireland; Microfilm Number: Microfilm 02469 / 01, "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655-1915", Ancestry.

[19] Catholic Parish Registers, The National Library of Ireland; Dublin, Ireland; Microfilm Number: Microfilm 02469 / 01, "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655-1915", Ancestry.

[20] Catholic Parish Registers, The National Library of Ireland; Dublin, Ireland; Microfilm Number: Microfilm 02469 / 01, "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655-1915", Ancestry.

1848 to 1864 - Griffith's Valuation for Lismore and Mocollop, Waterford, Ireland[21]

1848 to 1864 - Griffith's Valuation Kilrush, Spring duke, Decies Barony without Drum, Waterford, Ireland.[22]

11 Feb 1876 - Death of sister Julia Whelan (1822 - 1876) at Portsmouth, Scioto, Ohio.[23]

After 1881 - Death of daughter Johanna "Anna" Whelan (1855-1881), probably in Ireland.[24]

Anne is listed as the informant on nephew Michael Dunne's death record, so she is still alive.

1889 - Death of wife Catherine Sullivan (1819 - 1889), probably near Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland.[25]

I don't have the death record. I need to verify it. The record is for Catherine Whelan of Dungarvan, County Waterford, who was 70 years old when she died in 1889. Is this my ancestor? It is possible that Catherine Whelan died before civil registration began in 1864 or that her death was not registered.

After 1895 - Death of daughter Mary Whelan O'Neill at Waterford, Ireland.[26]

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[21] Ireland, Office of the General Valuation, General Valuation of Ratable Property in Ireland (Griffith's Primary Valuation), County Waterford, Dungarvan Poor Law Union, Kilrush Civil Parish, p. , Curraheen Commons Townland, Map Reference 2b, John Whelan, 1851; digital image, "Griffith's Valuation," Ask about Ireland.

[22] Ireland, Office of the General Valuation, General Valuation of Ratable Property in Ireland (Griffith's Primary Valuation), County Waterford, Dungarvan Poor Law Union, Kilrush Civil Parish, p. , Curraheen Commons Townland, Map Reference 2b, John Whelan, 1851; digital image, "Griffith's Valuation," Ask about Ireland.

[23] "Ohio Deaths, 1908-1953", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:X856-3J4: Tue Mar 05 04:52:10 UTC 2024), Entry for John Thomas Sullivan and John Sullivan, 16 Apr 1922.

[24] Estimated death date; no record yet found.

[25] Irish Genealogy database on Civil Records on October 2016. View document on Family Search

[26] Estimated death date; no record yet found for Mary Whelan O'Neill

Is it possible she came to live in the US and lived with one of her children in Massachusetts? If this were so, I would think one of her Massachusetts descendants would have known about it.

13 Jul 1896 - Death of son James H Whalen (1848 - 1896) at Kansas City, Wyandotte, Kansas.[27]

23 May 1898 - Death at Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland.[28]

John Whelan died on 23 May 1898 in Spring, Dungarvan district, at the age of ninety-six. He was recorded as a widower and farmer. The cause of death was senile decay, from which he was said to have suffered for seven years. The informant was his granddaughter, Anne Dunne of Spring, who was present at the time of death.

May - Burial at St. Mary's Cemetery in Dungarvan, Waterford, Ireland.[29]

[27] Newspapers.com - The Press in Kansas City, Kansas - 1896-07-17 - Page 5

[28] Dungarvan Superintendent Registrar's District, Dungarvan Registrar's District, Ireland Death Register, 189, No. 311, John Whelan, died 23 May 1898, in Spring Townland; digital image, Civil Records," IrishGenealogy.ie.

[29] "Find a Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q2DN-D2LN: 11 August 2023), John Whelan, ; Burial, Dungarvan, , County Waterford, Ireland, Saint Mary's Catholic Church; citing record ID 171587069, *Find a Grave*, http://www.findagrave.com.

Appendix

Baptism Sponsors and Local Surname Density

Several individuals bearing the surnames Whelan and Sullivan appear as sponsors in the baptism records of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan's children. While these surnames are common more broadly, their recurrence among sponsors is notable in the context of Kilrush parish, where Griffith's Valuation lists only eight individuals with the Whelan surname. This concentration strengthens the likelihood that at least some sponsors were close relatives.

Landholding Continuity in the Dungarvan Area

Valuation revision books created after Griffith's Valuation record changes in occupiers and lessors, sometimes noting the year a name was replaced. In these records, a name crossed out and replaced often reflects the death of the earlier occupier. For families such as the Whelans, who remained concentrated in the same group of townlands over long periods, these revisions can provide indirect evidence of death, succession, and continuity where civil records are limited.

In Dungarvan Rural, where the Spring townlands are located, valuation revision books do not consistently preserve matching lot numbers over time. As a result, it is not possible to trace a single parcel forward with certainty. This prevents confirmation that the property occupied by Bridget and Johanna Whelan in 1901 and 1911 was the same holding previously leased by John Whelan.

Spring Duke includes the former Dungarvan workhouse grounds, which remain in use today as a residential care and medical facility. The proximity of John Whelan's long-term residence to the workhouse underscores the vulnerability of families living in this townland during the famine years, when institutional relief was often the last resort. While no records place the Whelan family inside the workhouse, its presence within their immediate landscape is part of the context in which their lives unfolded.

County Waterford Death Records

County Waterford death records have been abstracted and are accessible through the County Waterford Library. The index is spelling-specific and provides only the full date of death, without a location. As a result, individuals with common surnames such as Whelan must be evaluated carefully, as multiple entries may share the same name but lack distinguishing details.

Anne Dunne

What is known

Anne Dunne appears in the record as the informant on John Whelan's death certificate. John Whelan died on 23 May 1898 in Spring, Dungarvan district, at the reported age of ninety-six. He is described in the record as a widower and farmer. Anne Dunne is identified as his granddaughter, noted as present at the time of death, and recorded as residing in Spring.

Anne Dunne has been identified as the daughter of Patrick Dunne and Catherine Whelan. Abstracted Irish birth records list eight children born to this couple, and the family appears in the 1901 and 1911 censuses residing in Curraheen Commons, Dungarvan, County Waterford. Catherine Whelan Dunne's reported age in these census records is consistent with her baptism.

What is inferred or uncertain

Anne Dunne's exact age at the time of John Whelan's death is not stated in the death record. While her role as informant establishes physical proximity and a close familial relationship, it does not, on its own, identify which of John Whelan's children was her parent. That connection rests on the reconstruction of the Dunne household through census and baptism records.

Why she matters

Anne Dunne provides the clearest generational link between John Whelan and the later, well-documented Dunne household. Her presence at his death confirms that John Whelan remained embedded in a local family network until the end of his life and that at least one line of his descendants stayed nearby. Through Anne Dunne, the transition from John Whelan's household to the next generation can be traced directly rather than inferred.

Patrick Dunne

What is known

The Dunne family was enumerated in the 1901 and 1911 Irish censuses, residing in Curraheen Commons, Dungarvan, County Waterford.

Patrick Dunne was married to Catherine Whelan, daughter of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan. Abstracted Irish birth records identify eight children born to Patrick and Catherine Dunne. Baptism records list thirteen entries for their children, though three appear to be duplicate registrations, supporting the existence of a large family while accounting for inconsistencies in the surviving record. The family remained resident in Curraheen Commons, a townland associated with John Whelan in Griffith's Valuation.

Honor Whelan is recorded as the sole baptism sponsor for John Dunne, at a time that coincides with Honoria Whelan's emigration to the United States. An Ann Whelan—understood here to be the same individual as Johanna (Anna) Whelan, baptized in 1855—appears as the baptism sponsor for Ellen Dunne in 1877. While none of these sponsorships can be proven individually as evidence of sibling relationships, taken together, these records place multiple Whelan women in close association with Catherine Whelan Dunne's children.

In the 1901 Irish census, Patrick Dunne appears in Curraheen Commons, recorded as age sixty, a farmer, born in County Waterford, living with his wife Kate and their children. The household included son James, age thirty, a farm laborer; Minnie, age twenty-eight, described in the census as an imbecile; and Annie, age twenty-two, a seamstress. All members of the household were born in County Waterford.

By the time of the 1911 census, Patrick Dunne was no longer present. The household is headed by his widow, Kate Dunne, age sixty-nine, born in County Waterford. She is recorded living with her daughter, Minnie, now age forty, and described in the census as an idiot, and with William Dunne, age sixty-four, her unmarried brother-in-law and a farmer. This establishes that Patrick Dunne died between the 1901 and 1911 censuses.

What is inferred or uncertain

No civil death record for Patrick Dunne has been identified in the material assembled here, and his exact date and place of death remain unknown. While his residence and family structure are well documented through census and baptism records, the records summarized do not include his marriage registration or identify his parents.

Patrick Dunne's relationship to other Dunne households in the area has not been fully resolved, though the continued residence of his family in Curraheen Commons suggests long-standing local ties.

Why he matters

Patrick Dunne matters because his household forms the clearest bridge between John Whelan's generation and the next generation that remained in Ireland. Through his marriage to Catherine Whelan and the stability of his family in Curraheen Commons, Patrick anchors the Whelan line locally after John Whelan's death. By 1911, Patrick Dunne had died, but his widow and children remained in Curraheen Commons, maintaining the household after his death.

Catherine Whelan Dunne

What is known

Catherine Whelan was the daughter of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan, associated with Spring (Duke/Marquis) and nearby townlands in the Dungarvan area. She married Patrick Dunne and lived with him and their children in Curraheen Commons, Dungarvan, County Waterford.

Abstracted Irish birth records identify eight children born to Patrick Dunne and Catherine Whelan. Baptism records for their children list additional entries, some of which appear to be duplicate registrations, indicating a large family while accounting for inconsistencies in the surviving record.

Catherine appears with her husband and children in the 1901 Irish census, residing in Curraheen Commons, Dungarvan, County Waterford, where she is recorded as age sixty and born in County Waterford. In the 1911 census,

she is listed as a widow, still residing in Curraheen Commons, living with her daughter, Minnie, and her brother-in-law, William Dunne.

Several Whelan women appear as baptism sponsors for Catherine Whelan Dunne's children. Honor Whelan is recorded as the sole sponsor for John Dunne at a time that coincides with Honoria Whelan's emigration to the United States. An Ann Whelan—understood here to be the same individual as Johanna (Anna) Whelan, baptized in 1855—appears as the baptism sponsor for Ellen Dunne in 1877. These records place multiple Whelan women in close association with Catherine's household.

What is inferred or uncertain

The civil registration record for Catherine Whelan's marriage to Patrick Dunne has not been cited in, and her exact date of birth is not stated, though it can be approximated from census ages and baptismal evidence. Her death date has been identified; she is buried with her husband, father, and some children at St. Mary's Church Cemetery in Dungarvan.

While Catherine's parentage is supported by census linkage, consistent residence, baptismal alignment, and the appearance of her daughter Anne Dunne as informant on John Whelan's death record

Why she matters

Catherine Whelan Dunne is the clearest surviving link between John Whelan's household and the next generation that remained in Ireland. Through her marriage, children, and long residence in Curraheen Commons, she shows how the Whelan family persisted locally after the famine and into the twentieth century. Her daughter Anne's role as informant at John Whelan's death places Catherine's line at the center of the family's final years in Spring and illustrates how proximity, care, and continuity shaped the end of his life.

The Dunne and Neill/O'Neill families remained in Ireland and continued to reside near John Whelan and other members of the Whelan family, who also stayed. Their persistence in the same local area suggests ongoing interaction among these households after some siblings emigrated.

Catherine Whelan Dunne was alive in 1921 and is a likely candidate for one of the sisters referenced in Nora Whelan Mullahy's obituary, which states that two sisters remained in Ireland at the time of Nora's death.

What is inferred or uncertain

Bridget Whelan

What is known

In the 1901 Irish census, Bridget Whelan is listed as the leaseholder of a property in Spring Duke, Dungarvan, County Waterford, the same townland in which John Whelan died in 1898. In the 1911 census, Bridget and Johanna Whelan are enumerated together in Spring Marquis, a variant name for the same townland, with the same residents appearing in both censuses.

In 1901, Bridget is recorded as the leaseholder of the property; by 1911, the leaseholder is listed as the Commissioners rather than a private individual, a designation that may indicate the involvement of the Poor Law Guardians. Bridget's continued residence in Spring across both censuses places her in direct geographic continuity with John Whelan's household after his death.

What is inferred or uncertain

Bridget Whelan's exact relationship to John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan is not proven by any single record. Unlike Johanna Whelan, whose baptism establishes her as their daughter, Bridget does not appear in the parish baptism records for their children under the name Bridget.

An initial possibility was that Bridget might correspond to a daughter baptized as Ellen; however, that Ellen Whelan is documented as having emigrated to Portsmouth, Ohio, eliminating her as a candidate. Bridget, therefore, remains without a confirmed baptismal identification in the surviving parish records.

No marriage or death record for Bridget Whelan has been identified, and there is no evidence that she had children. Her appearance in the 1901 and 1911 censuses, and her continued residence in Spring, suggest that she remained unmarried and locally resident into the early twentieth century, though this cannot be stated with certainty. One further possibility—that she entered religious life—cannot be ruled out, but no records have been identified to support or refute this.

Why she matters

Bridget Whelan matters because she represents continuity rather than dispersal. Her residence in Spring after John Whelan's death shows that the household did not dissolve with his passing but persisted locally through women who remained in place. Although Johanna Whelan is now established as a daughter of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan, Bridget's co-residence with her in Spring strengthens the case that Bridget, too, belonged to this family, even though that relationship cannot yet be proven. Bridget's long-term presence in the family's home townland underscores how continuity in this line was maintained through proximity and persistence rather than through formal documentation.

Johanna (Anna) Whelan

What is known

A church baptism record from Dungarvan records the baptism of Ann Whelan on 7 March 1855, daughter of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan. The sponsors were John Wade and Mary Sullivan. The given name Ann is consistent with Johanna appearing as Anna in later census records. This baptism establishes Johanna as a child of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan.

Johanna is the daughter of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan, but her relationship to Bridget Whelan is unproven. The two women resided together in Spring in both the 1901 and 1911 censuses, but no record explicitly identifies them as sisters.

Johanna Whelan appears as a baptism sponsor for Mary Whelan, raising the possibility that she is the same Johanna listed in the 1901 and 1911 censuses of Spring.

Johanna Whelan appears in the 1901 and 1911 Irish census records residing in Spring Duke (1901) and Spring Marquis (1911), variant names for the same townland in Dungarvan, County Waterford. In both censuses, she is enumerated with Bridget Whelan, indicating a shared household that persisted across at least a decade.

Johanna is recorded under the name *Anna* in the census, a common diminutive of Johanna. In 1901, Bridget is listed as the leaseholder of the

property; by 1911, the leaseholder is recorded as the Commissioners rather than a private individual, a designation that may indicate the involvement of the Poor Law Guardians.

Johanna Whelan also appears as a baptism sponsor for the children of Patrick Dunne and Catherine Whelan, placing her within the same kin and residential network as Catherine Whelan Dunne and reinforcing her proximity to the Dunne household.

What is inferred or uncertain

Johanna Whelan's relationship to John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan is not proven by any single record. She does not appear unequivocally in the parish baptism registers for their children under the name Johanna. However, there is a gap in the sequence of baptisms between the baptism of their daughter Mary on 7 June 1842 and that of their son Edward on 6 October 1847. A daughter named Johanna could fit chronologically within this interval. The Johanna (Anna) Whelan enumerated with Bridget in Spring in the 1901 and 1911 censuses remains a plausible candidate for a child of John and Catherine, but this identification is unproven.

No marriage or death record for Johanna Whelan has been identified, and there is no evidence that she had children. Her repeated appearance in Spring across multiple censuses suggests long-term residence and stability rather than migration, though this remains an inference based on the absence of contrary evidence.

A woman named Johanna Whelan is known to have been a Sister of Mercy in Ireland. However, no records have been identified that connect that individual to the Johanna Whelan residing in Spring, and the two should not be assumed to be the same person.

Why she matters

Johanna Whelan matters because she helps define the shape of the family that remained after emigration and loss. Her long-term residence in Spring, shared with Bridget Whelan (see the 1901 and 1911 censuses), places her within the physical and social space of John Whelan's household after his death and suggests that at least two daughters or close female relatives remained locally embedded rather than dispersing. Johanna's appearance as a baptism sponsor for the children of Patrick Dunne and Catherine Whelan

further situates her within the extended family network, indicating ongoing involvement in kin life rather than isolation.

Even without proof of her parentage, Johanna's persistence in the record demonstrates how family continuity in this line was maintained through proximity and participation rather than through formal documentation. Her life is visible not through milestones, but through steadiness—residence, association, and repeated presence in the same small place over time.

Mary Whelan O'Neill

What is known

Mary Whelan, the younger of two daughters named Mary born to John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan, was baptized in January 1851 in County Waterford. She later married Michael O'Neill, also recorded as Neill. A civil registration marriage index entry for Michael Neile and Mary Whalen supports her identification as the daughter of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan, who remained in Ireland.

Mary and Michael O'Neill resided in Ballyreilly townland, Ringville civil parish, County Waterford. The family appears in both the 1901 and 1911 Irish censuses, living in Ballyreilly. Census records show Mary living with her husband and children, and the children enumerated in the household correspond to those attributed to Michael and Mary O'Neill in compiled family records. Nine children are known to have been born to the couple.

The O'Neill household remained in the same general area as other members of the extended Whelan family who stayed in Ireland, including the Dunne family, indicating continued geographic proximity among these households after some siblings emigrated. At least 6 of her children immigrated, one to India and the others to the Boston area.

What is inferred or uncertain

Mary's age is inconsistent across census records. In the 1901 census, she is recorded as age thirty-five; in 1911, her age is listed as sixty-three. Both conflict with her January 1851 baptism and reflect either reporting error or age inflation common in later Irish census returns. Despite these discrepancies, the alignment of her residence, spouse, and children strongly supports her identification as the Mary baptized in 1851.

Two daughters named Mary were born to John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan approximately a decade apart. Given the survival of the younger Mary and the absence of later records for the elder child baptized in 1842, it is highly likely that the earlier Mary died before the birth of the second.

Mary Whelan O'Neill's death date and place have not been established in the material assembled here, though she is believed to have died in County Waterford after 1895. There is no evidence that she emigrated, and the absence of corresponding records in the United States argues against that possibility.

The second sister referenced in Nora Whelan Mullahy's obituary may have been Mary Whelan O'Neill or the youngest sister, Margaret Whelan. No death records have yet been identified for either woman that would establish which of them was living in 1921.

Why she matters

Mary Whelan O'Neill represents one of the two daughters through whom John Whelan's family remained locally rooted while other siblings emigrated. Her long residence in County Waterford and the size of her family demonstrate continuity across generations and provide a counterpoint to the emigrant lines of her siblings. Through Mary, the persistence of the Whelan family in the Dungarvan area can be traced well into the twentieth century.

Michael O'Neill (Neill)

What is known

Michael O'Neill, also recorded as Neill or Neile, married Mary Whelan, the daughter of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan who was baptized in 1851. A civil registration marriage index entry exists for the marriage of Michael Neile and Mary Whalen. Michael and Mary remained in County Waterford and are enumerated together in the 1901 and 1911 Irish censuses.

Nine children are known to have been born to the couple. Their consistent presence in Ballyreilly across multiple decades indicates a stable household that can be followed over time. Oldest son joined the army, married and died in India. 5 older children immigrated to the Boston area. It is unknown if a Neill family member was established there and helped their nieces and nephews.

What is inferred or uncertain

Michael O'Neill's birth date, parentage, and occupation are not specified in these notes. His surname appears with spelling variation (O'Neill, Neill, Neile), consistent with Irish civil and census records of the period. No civil death record for Michael O'Neill has been identified.

While Michael's connection to the Whelan family is established through his marriage to Mary Whelan, his relationship to other O'Neill households in the surrounding area has not been traced.

Why he matters

Michael O'Neill matters because his marriage to Mary Whelan anchors one of John Whelan's daughter lines firmly in County Waterford. Through Michael, the Whelan family extends into another locally rooted household whose members remain visible in census records well into the twentieth century. His family provides a clear example of continuity and growth among John Whelan's descendants who did not emigrate.

Edmund Whelan (possible sibling)

What is known

Edmund Whelan appears in parish and civil records associated with Dungarvan and nearby parishes and may belong to the same extended Whelan family as John Whelan (born circa 1820). The given name Edmund is relatively uncommon among Whelans in this area and period, which makes his repeated appearances in the records notable.

An Edmund Whelan, also recorded as Phelan, married Catherine Flynn on 13 February 1859 in the Aglish Roman Catholic parish. The marriage witnesses were Martin Phelan and Margaret Lynch. Edmund and Catherine had several sons whose births were registered in the Dungarvan district: John (born 25 June 1864), Patrick (27 January 1871), Edmond (10 December 1872), and Michael (16 February 1875). None of these records specifies Edmund's place of birth.

Edmund Whelan also appears as a baptism sponsor in records connected to the Whelan and Sullivan families, a role often filled by relatives and one that

places him within the same local and familial circle as John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan.

A widower named Edmund Whelan died on 16 April 1889 at the age of sixty in the Dungarvan Workhouse after a short illness. The death record does not identify relatives or provide a place of origin beyond the registration district.

What is inferred or uncertain

If the Edmund Whelan who married Catherine Flynn, served as a baptism sponsor, and died in the Dungarvan Workhouse is the same individual, his estimated birth year would place him within the same generation as John Whelan (born circa 1820), making a sibling relationship plausible. However, the surviving records do not explicitly connect Edmund to John Whelan or identify their parents.

The absence of birthplaces, parental names, and identifying details in Edmund's marriage, baptismal, and death records prevents confirmation that any Edmund appearing in County Waterford records can be securely identified as John Whelan's brother.

A DNA match with Greg Whelan connects across multiple Whelan and Sullivan lines, indicating a shared ancestral cluster. Greg Whelan's family tree includes both a John Whelan and an Edmund Whelan who fall within the appropriate time period to correspond to the missing sons of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan. However, Greg Whelan's documented Whelan ancestors are associated with County Limerick rather than County Waterford. If these men are related, it would require explaining a movement from the Dungarvan area to County Limerick, raising the possibility that the two oldest sons left Waterford rather than emigrating. At present, this connection remains suggestive but unresolved.

Why he matters

Edmund Whelan matters because he represents a credible candidate for extending John Whelan's family back one generation. His repeated presence in the same geographic area, his use of a relatively uncommon given name, and his appearance in baptism sponsorships tied to the Whelan and Sullivan families place him within the same social and familial orbit. While his exact relationship to John Whelan remains unproven, Edmund provides one of the

strongest available leads for reconstructing the earlier Whelan family in the Dungarvan area.

Edmund's candidacy as a possible sibling of John Whelan is further supported by naming patterns within the family. John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan named their second son Edmund (also recorded as Edward), and James Whelan later named one of his sons Edward, consistent with traditional Irish naming practices in which children were named after close relatives. While naming patterns are not proof of relationship, their recurrence here adds contextual support to the case for Edmund belonging to the same family group.

Other Possible Whelan Siblings (grouped)

What is known

In addition to Edmund Whelan, several individuals bearing the Whelan (or Phelan) surname appear in parish and civil records connected to Dungarvan, Kilrush, and nearby townlands during the same period as John Whelan. These individuals most often appear as baptism sponsors, leaseholders in close proximity, or adults enumerated repeatedly within the same small geographic area.

The appendix material identifies candidates named Julia, Mary, Brigid, Patrick, and Margaret Whelan whose dates and locations align broadly with what would be expected of siblings of John Whelan. Some of these given names also recur among the children of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan, consistent with intra-family naming patterns.

Several of these individuals appear to have remained in Ireland, with later records placing Whelan women in Spring and adjacent townlands well after John Whelan's death, suggesting continued local presence of the extended family.

What is inferred or uncertain

None of these individuals can be conclusively linked to John Whelan as siblings through a single record naming shared parents. Instead, the case for inclusion rests on convergence: shared parish, repeated association, geographic stability, and naming continuity across generations.

In some cases, the surviving records are too sparse to distinguish reliably between individuals of the same name, particularly where ages are missing, approximate, or contradictory. For that reason, these candidates are treated as a grouped set rather than as fully defined individuals, preserving the evidence without forcing identifications the records cannot yet support.

A man named Michael Whelan, age seventy-five, appears as entry no. 309 in [record set], raising the question of whether he may belong to the same extended Whelan family associated with Spring and the surrounding townlands. No record currently establishes his relationship to John Whelan.

Why they matter

These possible siblings matter because they suggest that John Whelan belonged to a broader family that remained locally concentrated rather than dispersed. Even without definitive proof, the repeated appearance of Whelans in the same small cluster of townlands over multiple decades supports a pattern of kin-based continuity that runs through John Whelan's life.

One additional clue points toward an earlier generation. The parents of Julia Whelan Sullivan are listed on her Ohio death record as John Whelan and Mary Cooley, a name that may correspond to Mary Crowley, given accent, spelling variation, and transcription practices. If correct, this identification would place John Whelan within a family headed by John Whelan and Mary Crowley/Cooley and would extend the family line back one generation, opening an earlier chapter of residence and family formation in the Dungarvan area. While this connection cannot yet be proven, it materially sharpens the outline of the family John Whelan likely came from.

John Whelan (baptized 1840) — possible brother of James and Nora

What is known

The John Whelan enumerated in the 1901 census is a plausible candidate for the unnamed brother referenced in Nora Whelan Mullahy's 1921 obituary, based on his age and residence in Dungarvan. However, the census record does not establish that this John Whelan survived to 1921, nor does any record directly identify him as a son of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan or explicitly name him as a sibling of James or Nora.

What is inferred or uncertain

The John Whelan enumerated in the 1901 census is a plausible candidate for the unnamed brother referenced in Nora Whelan Mullahy's 1921 obituary, based on his age and residence in Dungarvan. However, the census record does not establish that this John Whelan survived until 1921, nor does any record identify him as a son of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan or explicitly name him as a sibling of James or Nora.

The census entry provides insufficient household detail to distinguish this John Whelan from other men of the same name in the district. No marriage, death, or additional census records have been identified that would securely place him within the family.

While Whelan/Phelan and Sullivan individuals appear as baptism sponsors for the children of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan and are likely relatives, the surviving records do not clarify whether these sponsors were married or single, nor do they establish a direct link to this John Whelan.

A DNA match with Greg Whelan connects across multiple Whelan and Sullivan lines, indicating a shared ancestral cluster. Greg Whelan's family tree includes both a John Whelan and an Edmund Whelan who fall within the appropriate time period to correspond to the missing sons of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan. However, Greg Whelan's documented Whelan ancestors are associated with County Limerick rather than County Waterford. If these men are related, it would require explaining a movement from the Dungarvan area to County Limerick, raising the possibility that the two oldest sons left Waterford rather than emigrating. At present, this connection remains suggestive but unresolved.

Why he matters

John Whelan, baptized in 1840, matters because if he can be securely placed within the family, he would account for one of the last unresolved children of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan.

John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan

What is known

The index reveals a significant presence of the Whelan surname in County Waterford, with nearly six hundred entries. Only eight of these entries occur in Kilrush parish. Among those eight are three separate listings for a man named John Whelan.

Griffith's Valuation for Kilrush parish, compiled in 1851, records one John Whelan leasing land in Spring (Duke) townland, another leasing a garden in Loughmore townland, and a third leasing a house, office (outbuildings such as a barn, piggery, or sty), and a small plot of land in Curraheen Commons townland. These townlands are immediately adjacent to one another. Given the scarcity of the Whelan surname in Kilrush parish and the close proximity of these holdings, it is likely that the three entries refer to the same individual. Only one of the holdings included a house; the additional plots, including the garden, likely contributed to feeding and sustaining the household.

A map of the townland boundaries shows Spring (Duke/Marquis), Loughmore, and Curraheen Commons as adjoining or near-adjoining parcels. Read against that geography, the three Griffith's Valuation entries for "John Whelan" function less as separate locations than as a single working landscape, reinforcing the likelihood that they refer to one man. Only one holding included a house; the additional plots, including the garden, may have been used to supplement food production and support the household.

Photographs of the Whelan townlands are included. The original family home appears to have been torn down, but the continued residence of Bridget and Johanna (Anna) Whelan in Spring in 1901 and 1911 raises the possibility that they remained in the same house or on the same holding. The 1901 and 1911 census household forms describe the dwelling and its outbuildings, preserving details of the property even where the structure itself no longer survives.

John and Catherine's family likely lived on land that later became part of the Dungarvan Workhouse and hospital grounds, residing in Spring (Duke or Marquis) for at least fifty years. They may have received some form of poor relief, and mentions of them might appear in the extensive Board of Guardians minutes, which are housed at the Waterford City Archives. Searching these records could be a future research option, though it may require several hours due to the lack of an index.

A primary goal is to locate tombstone inscriptions for John, his wife Catherine, and possibly sisters Johanna and Bridget is to see if these inscriptions provide connections.

Visiting Spring Duke townland could also be beneficial, as locals might possess personal knowledge of the Whelan family.

What is inferred or uncertain

Whether John Whelan or Catherine Sullivan were born in the Dungarvan Catholic parish is uncertain. If John was born there, locating his baptism record may not be possible, as the parish baptism registers contain a gap between April 1798 and September 1811 that overlaps with his likely birth period, based on his reported age at death. Several individuals bearing the surnames Whelan/Phelan and Sullivan appear as baptism sponsors for the couple's children and are likely related, but the commonality of these surnames and the lack of identifying detail limit confident identification.

The Catholic records for Dungarvan contain baptism entries from February 17, 1787, to April 27, 1798, and from March 3, 1811, to November 12, 1880, along with marriage records from May 14, 1809, to November 12, 1880. However, a gap in the baptism records overlaps with the likely period of John's birth, based on his age at death.

The names of John Whelan's and Catherine Sullivan's parents are not recorded in the material assembled here. Catherine's birth year is unknown, and her death may have gone unregistered or occurred before civil registration began in 1864. The absence of probate records for John Whelan further limits the ability to confirm relationships through property succession; even if Bridget Whelan later appears as an occupier of the Spring holding, this would not, on its own, establish her relationship to him.

DNA match clusters suggest that John Sullivan and Edward Sullivan, who later settled with their families in Portsmouth, Ohio, may have been brothers of Catherine Sullivan. Some U.S. records for these men may name their parents, providing a potential avenue for identifying Catherine's family. Other possible Sullivan relatives may be represented among the baptism sponsors for John and Catherine's children.

Research Notes (Process and Leads)

Board of Guardians minutes for the Dungarvan Workhouse may contain references to John Whelan or other members of his family, particularly if they received poor relief during the famine years. These records are housed

at the Waterford City Archives and are extensive, with no index. Locating relevant entries would require a page-by-page review.
A primary goal is to locate tombstone inscriptions for John Whelan, his wife Catherine, and possibly sisters Johanna and Bridget, to determine whether these inscriptions provide additional family connections. Visiting Spring Duke townland may also be useful, as local knowledge could shed light on the Whelan family's long residence there.

Michael Whelan

What is known

By 1921, a man named Michael Whelan was living near Dungarvan with his wife and children. His continued residence in Ireland is consistent with the unnamed brother referenced in Nora Whelan Mullahy's 1921 obituary, which states that one brother and two sisters remained in Ireland at the time of her death.

Ellen Whelan, Honora (Nora) Whelan, and their brother James Whelan are documented as having immigrated to the United States. A man named Michael Whelan appears in the 1885 Kansas state census living with James Whelan and his family, suggesting a possible connection to this sibling group. However, the age reported for this Michael does not align cleanly with expectations based on the known family structure.

What is inferred or uncertain

It is unclear whether the Michael Whelan who appears in the 1885 Kansas census and the Michael Whelan living near Dungarvan in 1921 are the same individual, or whether either can be securely identified as a son of John Whelan and Catherine Sullivan. The discrepancy in reported ages complicates identification, and no record has yet been found that conclusively links Michael Whelan to both the Irish and U.S. records.

Margaret Whelan

What is inferred or uncertain

The second sister referenced in Nora Whelan Mullahy's obituary may have been Mary Whelan O'Neill or the youngest daughter, Margaret Whelan. No death records have yet been identified for either woman that would establish which of them was living in 1921.